

1 THE INTERPRETATION OF CUSTOM 25

be found to give it expression. The cult of the³⁵³
fairies, these days, is branded as 'superstition'. It⁷⁷⁶
is under fire from townsman, school-teacher, and
priest. But even those who could express no views
could be seen to act as if they too were believers.

Where fairy paths were remembered to pass the
house, they went by the west room. Where food
and water was left out at night, it was left there.
No outhouse, shed, or other building could be built
on this side of the house. That would bring bad^[777]
luck. Very few could or would tell why; they left it
to a common inference. The building would be 'in
the way'. Nevertheless, reluctant as they might be
to express belief, my hosts none the less practised
it. No house of Luogh's twenty-six had any shed or^[342]
outhouse at its western end.

Here were two very definite associations with the
west room. What did they mean? The attitudes
they represented were respect, and perhaps a little
fear; but it was respect that was dominant. What
was this respect and why should it show itself in
fairy-lore and in household furnishing?

Faced with such a problem the anthropologist's³⁵³
usual recourse is to history. Traditionally the west⁷⁷³
is the land of the dead. In the ancient sun-cult, in⁷⁷⁶
which early man has likened his own progress to
that of the sun's daily and yearly course, the west
is the sacred abode of the dead. Even today, we
speak of dying, half jocularly, as 'going west'. In
ancient Celtic mythology, the heaven at life's end,

353 *Tír na nÓg*, and Avalon, the island of apple trees
773 which the Greeks knew as the Garden of the
776 Hesperides, and which in a Christian rendering
the blessed Saint Brendan may have reached, lies
to the west in the setting sun. It is very likely that
in this folk practice there survives nearly all that
remains of an elaborate early mythology.

Alas for our questioning, no one remembers
Avalon in Luogh, *Tír na nÓg* is a dying legend.
If you ask the old men about the west, tales of
sunken cities and strange sea-creatures greet your
ears; ask about the fairies and fairy paths and
you get, first, indignant denials of such degrading
belief, and then anecdotes, tales, incidents, which
illustrate their character and their power for good
and evil. Ask about the furniture of this room, and
you learn only that it is the right and fitting thing
that the objects fill this room and no other. No one
can trace the continuity; tradition is felt in the mass
rather than in the particular.

We are left then with what we can hear and ob-
serve about the present. To question upon any-
thing else is to get nowhere; it merely starts a
chain of obscuring generalities more inspired by
the question than by what Luogh feels and thinks
and does.

353 But the case is not hopeless. If one casts one's
888 reliance upon observations and questions in the
present, new facts appear. The west room figures
in marriage. In the contracts drawn up it is often

778 like a basin ; it contains almost a gallon of water ; it is curious how it came there, for there is not a pebble of granite here."

527 The people of the same island keep as a special holiday the 11th of April, St. Leo's day, and will not do any work on it, while the inhabitants of Inishbofin do not observe it at all.

773 2. *Legends and Traditions.*—There are many legends and traditional tales about places on the islands, of which the few which could be collected are given below ; the main outlines only, in which all versions agree, are related, as each story was heard from more than one person, and the versions differed in detail.

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Lough Bofin (The Lake of the White Cow).—A very long time ago, so long that nobody knows exactly when, Inishshark was a well-known island, and was inhabited ; but Inishbofin was unknown, as, owing to enchantment, it was invisible. One day two fishermen were lost in a dense fog, and drifted on until they found themselves beside a rock, on which they landed and made a fire.¹ As soon as the fire touched the rock, the fog suddenly lifted, and the men found themselves on the shingly beach (now called the North Beach) of a strange island ; on one side of the shingly belt on which they were was the sea, and on the other a lough, and close to them was an old woman driving a white cow down to the water. She drove the cow into the lake, and struck her with a stick, when she was at once turned into a rock. One of the fishermen, who had followed out of curiosity, was very angry at what he saw, and in his rage he struck the woman, and at once both he and she were transformed into stones. The rock and stones may be seen there still. The cow used to rise up out of the lake, and walk about the island when any great event was about to happen, but it is now more than thirty years since she was last seen. It is from this cow that the island takes its name (Inis bo-finne).

173 *Corrig Guairim.*—An old chief of the islands named Guairim (or Gorham), whose castle was situated just above Bofin harbour, had a dispute with the monks of St. Colman's Abbey about the payment of tithe, and, not content with not paying, he, with the assistance of a family named Halligan, took the settlement of the dispute into his own hands by seizing six of the monks, whom he slew by the roadside in Middlequarter, at a spot where their blood is said to be seen still on the anniversaries of the murder. Gorham did not escape unpunished for this bloodthirsty act ; he was taken over to Rinville

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¹ Another version is—"One of them knocked the ashes out of his pipe, for they had pipes then, though we do not know what they used to smoke in them."

173 began to sink.¹ Suspecting that the bell was the cause of their misfortune, they threw it into the sea, and the ship was saved. Next morning, when some of the islanders were searching for sea-weed on the shore, they found the bell lying broken among the rocks. This relic has long ago disappeared, having been cut up into pieces which [178] were worn as amulets, most of which have been taken to America, but it is said that some are still kept as great treasures by some old people in Inishbofin, who refuse to show them to anyone.

Richard O'Flaherty, writing in 1684, makes mention of this bell ("H-Iar Connaught," p. 117) . . . "Inisark is of the same property with Bofin and the saint therein worshipped, St. Leo; of whose reliques is a bell there extant."

773
823 *St. Leo's Foot-print.*—There is pointed out an impression in the rock on which Cloghan Leo is built, which is said to be the imprint of the saint's foot, and the people's explanation of how it came there is, that when he had finished building the cloghan he had to leap down, as he had no ladder, and alighting on the rock he left the print of his foot upon it, where it still remains.

173 There is a tradition on the islands of a large treasure of gold being hidden on Davillaun (a small island of the Bofin group), on which a large vessel of the Spanish Armada was wrecked, and some of the people claim to know exactly where it is. There are also many stories about Lord Nelson, under whom several men from these islands served, and wild tales of the old smugglers; and a very narrow passage between two dangerous rocks through which a daring smuggler once steered his vessel, and thus baffled his pursuers, is pointed out.

ARCHÆOLOGY.

178 Though making no pretensions to being an archæologist, yet as an inquiry of this sort would be imperfect without, at least, a partial [172] description of the antiquities of the place, I hope that the notes here-under given may, in some degree at least, supply the want.

1. *Survivals.*—In these the locality is comparatively rich, a good many old implements and methods of working, which have become extinct in other places, being still common. Such are the continuance of the use of plants and lichens as dyes, and some details of dress, such as the old blue cap, &c., which have been referred to before.

¹ One version of the story states that the ship had got as far as the Bay of Biscay!

FAIRS AND GATHERINGS

788 is that of St. Patrick's Purgatory, on a small island in Lough
778 Derg in Donegal. Still a powerful attraction, it has been main-
tained since the early middle ages and has been described,
with piety or derision, by innumerable writers since one of the
earliest accounts was written by Giraldus Cambrensis, about
1185. The pilgrimage became very popular in the early nine-
teenth century, when the numbers of visitors are said to have
averaged 10,000 annually. Mr. A. T. Lucas has shown that
this pilgrimage resulted in the distribution through the country
of certain portable wooden crucifixes popularly known as penal
crosses.¹ Carved from the solid in a characteristic style, they
bear dates between 1700 and 1830 (Fig. 84). It seems that they
were sold to pilgrims at Lough Derg and taken home as
souvenirs after being used in the devotional ritual. They were
a local development, no doubt initiated by some peasant wood-
carver, of simple crosses, consisting merely of two sticks tied
together, such as are still made at some patterns and occa-
sionally at the festivals of St. Briget and All-Hallows. In this
way, as in sanctifying the gatherings themselves, Christianity
has taken over the symbols and strength of the elder faiths.

The pilgrimage of Croagh Patrick, in Co. Mayo, is the most
celebrated of those held at the end of July, involving the ascent
of high mountains and marking, by tradition, the close of
summer and the beginning of harvest, as discussed in the
following chapter. Here we may quote once more the *Parlia-
mentary Gazetteer* for 1845: 'No place in Ireland is the scene
of more superstitious observances, or a more popular resort of
pilgrims and devotees, or the site of more numerous small
memorials of superstition, or the subject of more generally
credited legends of hagiology. Vast crowds of miserable human
beings . . . swarm all over its summit and sides and skirts;
one grand current legend is almost everywhere believed in the
teeth of all credulity, that St. Patrick gathered hither, and swept
hence all venomous creatures in Ireland.'

¹A. T. Lucas, *Co. Louth Arch. Journ.*, 13 (1954), 145-74.

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VI. *Underground Folk.*

To underground folk, other than fairies, I have only found 776
few and uninteresting references, such as,—“an old woman
looked out of the side of the fort, and the man ran away”;
“he heard *them* talking inside the hill”; and “the little old man
came out of the fort, and shut it behind him.”

VII. *Water Spirits and Mer-folk.*

The Shannon, according to the *Dindsenchas*, derived its name 103
from a sea-lady, but evidently not a “water-breather.” Sinenn,
daughter of Lodan, came from *Tir-tairngire*, the Land of Youth, 773 ●
under the sea, to visit the well of Connla, under the river now 776
called Shannon. She came to Linn na feile, but was drowned
at Tarrchinn “on this side Shannon,” and gave her name to
the great river.³ A water spirit, or mermaid, is remembered
at Killone Lake and Newhall. The legend is preserved in
several variants. In 1839 it was told how O’Brien of Killone
saw a lovely girl in the lake, and caught her. Bringing her
home, he found to his great disgust and disappointment that
she had a fish’s tail. He ordered her to be kept in a “crib,” and
fed and well-treated. As she never spoke, a local fool threw
scalding water on her to make her say something. He was only
too successful, for, after a wild, blood-curdling shriek, she cried:

“As the return of the salmon from the stream,
A return without blood or flesh,
May such be the departure of the O’Briens
Like ears of wild corn from Killone.”⁴

The legend recorded, almost at the same time (1840), by 773
Crofton Croker was told to me by the old peasantry, about 1876, 776
as follows:—A mermaid used to swim up a stream that flowed
under the cellars of Newhall, in order to steal wine. The
“master” (an O’Brien), or the butler, hid and stabbed her, (or
threw her into a tub of scalding water where she became a
big lump of jelly), and her blood ran down the stream and

³ “The Dind Senchas,” *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv. (1894), p. 456.

⁴ *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. ii., p. 111.

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- 773 reddened all the lake. As the wounded being floated away she
776 wailed:—

"As the water maid floats weak and bloodless down the stream
So the O'Briens shall go from Killone."

Prof. Brian O'Looney heard in his youth, and told me, a tale nearly identical:—

"As the mermaid goes on the sea,
A wretched victim devoid of flesh and blood,
So shall the race of O'Brien pass away
Till they leave Killone in wild weeds."

The lake, like the stream already noted at Caherminaun, turns red at times from iron scum and red clay after a dry summer.

[823] This is supposed to be caused by the local Undine's blood, and to foretell a change of occupants in Newhall. Strange to say, I saw it happen last when the place was let by the McDonnells to the O'Briens. The cellar at Newhall has its outer section roofed with large slabs, and the inner consists of long, low, cross vaults. In the end of the innermost recess is a built-up square patch, which sounds hollow, and is said to show the opening closed to keep out the thievish mermaid. There seems no evidence of any stream running underneath the cellar, but local tradition tells of a vaulted passage down to the lake.

776 Sruhaunaglara (prattling brook), in Kilseily on the flank of the eastern hills, probably owes its name, as many brooks their
[103] legend, to the supposed talking of water-folk. There was some belief in mer-folk at Kilkee before 1879, but it has nowadays got touched-up for tourists. Such touching-up, however, cannot have affected the ugly, drunken, stupid *merrow* Coomara (sea-dog), who kept the souls of drowned sailors in magic lobster-pots in his house under the sea, off Killard, as related by Crofton Croker.⁵ The *merrow's* power of passing through the waves depended on a magic cap, and a duplicate of it enabled his human guest to visit him.

The last reported appearance of a mermaid is so recent as the end of April, 1910. Several people, including Martin Griffin, my informant, saw what they are firmly convinced was a mer-woman in a cove a little to the north of Spanish Point, near Miltown,

⁵ *Op. cit.*, Part II. (1858), pp. 30-31 ("The Soul Cages").

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house. The old residences are in ruins, and their desertion took place over sixteen years ago.¹⁶

It is to the credit of the people of Eastern Clare that it possesses hardly any haunted houses, but there are two of transcending interest.

The first lay near the Fergus. A footstep followed one at night on the upper stairs, and curtains were drawn round the old-fashioned beds,—if not by "a hand of bone," at least by a "thing that no man sees." On more than one occasion all the bed-clothes were lifted, "as if by four people," off a sleeper. Even the late Mr. Richard Stacpoola, a man of iron nerve, told how once on a visit this happened to him; indignant at what he supposed to be a foolish joke, he got up, locked the door, searched the room, and kept awake, only to find the action repeated twice; he struck a light at once, but no one was visible. Hands were laid on the doors and their handles. Anyone who "married into" the family or its connections was liable to have their hands kissed in the dark on their first visit. An invisible dog used to howl before deaths, being only heard from the room of the relation of the foredoomed person. A ghost, (said to be of no less a person than Maureen Rhue, the famous Amazonian O'Brien of 1640-50), used to pass up and down the long, straight avenue. Legend said that, after the murder of her twenty-fifth husband,—(only three husbands are known to history, which is also ignorant of their murders),—she was fastened into a hollow tree and starved to death. There were also the ghosts of two nuns,—for the place was said to have been a convent, without a particle of evidence,¹⁷—and, in 1838, a lady on horseback at a "Druid's Altar." (The last-named was probably a pure invention of the then owner.) There was, however, another ghostly object of which I heard from an eye-witness still living. A dark spot used to break out in the wall of a quaint old brick-floored room, with an inside window looking down into the kitchen. The legend was that an old nurse, a pensioner of the family about 1750, used to live in this room, and died, aged over 90, suddenly

¹⁶ So Mrs. MacDonnell.

¹⁷ Except that skeletons, and, it is said, crucifixes, were found in the garden just beside the house.

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776 ravens and owls connected with the Ross-Lewins, Westropp's, and other families as death warnings have already been referred to (p. 190).

X. Spectral Lands and Cities.

773 Clare formed a part of the outmost fringe of the ancient world, and its people were deeply impressed with the mysteries and wonders of the Outer Ocean. The voyage of Maelduin tells of the son of a Clare man sailing out into "the great endless deep" and finding isles of surpassing beauty and wonder, and the "Hui Corra" in deep repentance sailed towards the setting sun from the creek at the northern bound of Clare "to meet the Lord on the sea."⁸⁰ St. Brendan, eager to seek out new islands, went for advice to St. Enda, a saint closely connected with Clare, (where Killeany bears his name), and its appanage, Aran. In the bay to the north of Clare William Ires, a native of Galway, became accustomed to the ocean which he crossed with Columbus, and it may be that his tales of Hy Brasil, of St. Brendan's Isle, and of the "thrice fifty distant Isles in the ocean to the west of us. Larger than Erin, twice is each of them, or thrice,"⁸¹ encouraged the frightened sailors of the great Admiral to persevere a little longer.

Hy Brasil,⁸² the Isle of the Blessed, is possibly a legacy from ancient paganism, which placed its Tirnan-oge, The Land of Youth, in the waves "on the west side down from Aran, where goes the sun to its couch."⁸³ The desire for the ageless, deathless land prevailed all up the western coast, and was strong in Kilkee in 1868-78, and perhaps even still. I myself saw the mirage several times in 1873 giving the perfect image of a shadowy island with wooded hills and tall towers springing into sight for a moment as the sun sank below the horizon. I have also heard from Kilkee fishermen legends, like that embodied in the verses of Gerald

⁸⁰ "Voyage of the Hui Corra," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xiv. (1893), p. 37; *Voyage of Bran*, (ed. Kuno Meyer), vol. i., p. 13; "Voyage of Maelduin," *Revue Celtique*, vol. ix. (1888), p. 45.

⁸¹ *Voyage of Bran*, vol. i., p. 14.

⁸² It is marked on a series of ancient maps from the fifteenth to the middle of the seventeenth centuries.

⁸³ *Graells on Vikings*, (Irish Texts Society, vol. i.), p. 21.

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Griffin, of men starting seaward to reach its fairy shores, and never returning. 773

Another magic island was Kilstuithen, or Kilstuiffen, in Liscannor Bay. On the southern shore, in 1839, there was said to have been an ecclesiastical city swallowed up by the earthquake that split Innis Fitae into the present three islands,³⁴ which suggests derivation from O'Connor's then recent version of the various Irish Annals. On the northern shore the tradition was fuller. Kilstuithen sank when its chieftain lost its golden key in battle, nor will it be restored until the key is recovered from its hiding place, some say, under the ogham-inscribed gravestone of "Conan" on Mount Callan. (When that place was dug out only bones and rusted iron were found.)³⁵ The island, with its golden-roofed palaces, churches, and towers, may at times be seen shining far below the waves, but once in seven years it rises above them, and those who see it then are said to die before its next appearance. The fishermen [731] [763]

"point how high the billows roll above lost Kilsaheen,
Its palaces and towers of pride
All buried in the rushing tide
And deep-sea waters green."³⁶

Comyn, in *The Adventures of the Three Sons of Thorailbh* (1750), connects it with the raid of Crochaun, Dahlin, and Sal in the time of Finn and their defeat of Ruidin, Ceannir, and Stiuithin. Legend near Lehinch places the battle at Bohercrochaun. A pretty legend in 1878 told how those rowing over the sunken island smell the flowers of its fields through the waters.³⁷

³⁴ Annals of Ulster, Clonmacnoise, and the Four Masters; *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 304.

³⁵ *The Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, ser. II., vol. I. (1872), pp. 269 et seq.

³⁶ *Monks of Kilsaheen*.

³⁷ *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. I., pp. 300-4, vol. II., pp. 74, 99; *Handbook to Lisdoonvarna* (1896), p. 64; *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. XXX., p. 289; *Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, vol. III., p. 197, where I have collected the materials at some length. Other sunken monasteries and churches are alleged at Monaster Letteragh, off the coast of Mayo, and the Cantillons' Church in Ballybeigue Bay in Kerry. I do not regard the story in the *Irish Penny Journal*, vol. I., p. 362, by J. Geraghty MacTearnaigh, as anything but a work of fiction; it is very artificial,

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- 773 Another sunken island off Loop Head is named by the Rev. John Graham and the Halls,²⁸ and called Kilstiffin or Kilstapheen. I heard no such tradition in Moyarta, but O'Curry alludes to it without contradiction, although he was a native and son of a veritable repertory of the local legends of the Irrus.²⁹ The towers and other edifices were visible at times under the waves, and its inhabitants sometimes raised destructive storms over its site when all around was calm.
- [821]

[774] The large lake of Cullaun (Cullaunyheeda) near Tulla is reputed to cover a palace or a city. Tradition said that a chief, Sioda MacNamara, (probably the restorer of the beautiful "Abbey" of Quin in 1402), was carried into the depths by a "water horse" which he had caught and trained. The rock off which his treacherous steed leaped was shown before 1870, and the chief was believed to be sleeping till "the last weird battle in the west," doomed to win Ireland her liberty and a glorious place amongst the nations. It seems likely that it was from the same lake that magic cattle issued, as I heard about Kilkishen, near it, in 1877. A local bard, Michael Hogan, refers to the lake in one of his poems,³⁰ but how far he embodies local legend I am unable to say. His light-hearted, if lawless, hero is surprised on coming to "Cullaun's fairy waters" to see a noble park instead of a lake. He hits his cow in surprise, and she leaps the fence. Following her he reaches the palace of an ancient chief, who entertains him and dismisses him with his marvellously fattened cow. He finds at the fair that he has been absent for a year under the waters of the lake.

"Thro' wild Cullane's embowering shades—
Beneath the silver starlight, sleeping,
He pass'd—the trees, with silent heads,
Upon his darken'd path hung weeping.

following other romances, and contradicting the genuine legends in several particulars.

²⁸ *Mason's Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., p. 490, collected by Rev. J. Graham from the Behanes, Landers, Contis, and Coonerties of Kilrush and Carrigaholt; Mr. and Mrs. S. Hall, *Ireland: Its Scenery etc.*, vol. ii., p. 436.

²⁹ *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. ii.

³⁰ *Lays and Legends of Thomond*, pp. 13, 20.

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He turned to see the Lake's blue plain,
With all its emerald glories round it;
But there appear'd a grand demesne,
By towering elms and poplars bounded.

He look'd behind—the scene was gone—
A thrill of wonder gather'd o'er him;
For, nothing save the blue Lake shone
With all its silver curls, before him."

There was another legend, but a very vague one, about a city submerged by a magic well under the beautiful lake of Inchiquin. The legend seems to have died out near Corofin. Another curious legend about Inchiquin lake was found by Dr. G. U. MacNamara, to the effect that the lake originated from an old woman piercing the earth with a spindle, when waters burst out and filled the valley.

THOS. J. WESTROPP.

(To be continued.)

FIFTY HAUSA FOLK-TALES (continued).

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19. *The Hyæna and the Wrestling Match.* (B. G.)

This is about the Hyæna. She had a husband, a male hyæna.¹ So she arose and got a vessel to go to the stream. So she went and came to (the place where) games were being held (by) the Elephant, the Buffalo, the Hartebeeste, the Roan Antelope, the Gazelle, the Jerboa, the Hare, the Lizard, and the Water-lizard. They were having a game. Now the Elephant was the great one, the umpire. So she (Elephant) said,—“Now (in this) wrestling game whoever throws down another may eat the flesh of him whom he has beaten.” Now, on the Hyæna's arrival, they said,—“Are you not coming to play?” She said,—“I am (playing) certainly.” When she had put down

¹“Kara” is nearly always employed for both sexes, but the word itself ending in “a” is feminine; only in story 38 is it made masculine. The male hyæna is larger than the female.

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XVIII. *Animal and Plant Superstitions.*

773 I have had occasion to search, in Irish works of pre-Tudor date,
825 for sidelights on the early fauna of Ireland, and the results, so far,
are meagre. There is constant reference to dogs, cattle, horses,
deer, and wolves, but rarely do any but the hound put on any
definite shape. Even the bull plays little more part in the *Tain*
bo Cualgne than Briseis does in the *Iliad*, and generally the
animal is a mere appendage to an incident.

[103] *Cattle*.—Place-names give us little information save as to the
custom of driving the animals up to the hills in the summer time,
Mount Callan being girt by a series of "Boolies" (*i.e.* milking
places),²⁰ usually qualified by some phrase such as "of the sun"
or "of the sea-gulls." The cow was the practical unit of value in
olden times, three cows being worth a woman-slave, and a single
one the "ounce," which seems to have been an imaginary
standard. Legendary cows, such as the Glasgeivnagh and Glas
gamhnach, play a large part in the traditions, the hoofmarks of
the latter pitting all the rocks of eastern Burren and its borders.
Another supernatural cow predominates in the extreme west of
the barony, near Crumlin. The Seven Streams of Teeskagh were
said to originate from the exuberant milk of a "Glas." Super-
natural bulls and water cattle have already been dealt with.²¹

778 The most remarkable customs relating to cattle centre round
825 Lough Fergus. Along its north shore stand twelve cairns in an
233 irregular line. On the eighth from the east end are two natural
823 stones resembling a small chair and a cross, named after St.
[776] Forgas, (who appears in none of the calendars and is perhaps a
river-spirit). Along with these are put a china image, bits of iron,

²⁰ Boulavaun (white milking ground), Boulirredda (red place), Boolinduff
(black), Bouldynamiscan (of the dish), and Bouldynagreana (sunny) at Callan;
Booltiagh, Boolybrien, Bouldynagleeragh (of the clergy), Boolyknockaun,
Booldynaska (of the eels), and Cloonbooley in Kilmaley; Bouldiaghine in
Kilnaboy, (but the inhabitants say that Booltiagh means "mired by cattle"
not "milking place"); Bouldynamwella (of sea-gulls) in Kilmihil; Boolty-
doolan in Killadyerst; and Boolervin (pleasant) in Kilkeedy. In east Clare
the name is rare, Bouldynacnak (of the Easter sports), in Slieve Bernagh, being
the only one known to me.

²¹ Vol. xxi., pp. 480-1.

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A FOLKLORE SURVEY OF COUNTY CLARE (*continued*).

XIX. *Rocks, Caves, and Stones.*

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223 *Rock markings.*—The strange marks left in the flat crags by the weathering of softer portions and of fossils have caused numerous legends. The dish-like hollows in the crags below the hermitage of St. Colman MacDuach, at the great "Cliff of the Eagle," in Kinallia, the name Bohernameesh (*bothar na mias*, i.e. road of the dishes), and marks like the footprints of men and animals all seem to have been seized on by the saint's biographers.¹ Colman, brother of King Guaire "the hospitable," of Hy Fiachrach Aidhne (the district round Gort), early in the seventh century retired to fast and pray in the wilderness. After a most austere observance of Lent, a companion monk yearned for meat, and Colman pitied him and prayed. The king's Easter feast therefore flew to the hermitage, pursued by the whole Court. Terrified by the angry warriors Colman again prayed, and their feet and the hoofs of their horses stuck fast in the rocks. The legend is still told in a form identical with that in the Life.² The servant is said to have died from the feast, and his grave is shown beside the Boher.³

Where Burren and Inchiquin meet, on the Glasgeivnagh Hill,

¹ Cf. *The Tripartite Life of St. Patrick* (ed. W. Stokes, Rolls Ser.), p. 405.

² Colgan, *Acta SS. Hibernia*.

³ *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. I., p. 100 (Ms. Royal Irish Academy).

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the marks on the fretted rocks are attributed to the grey cow of *Lon mac Leefa* (*Liomhtha*). It is a very lonely and impressive spot. Ascending at the beautiful waterfall of the Seven Streams in Teeskagh, (a curtain of silver network over a cliff, sheeted with long moss and ferns, with ledges white with anemones, in spring, and fields blue with gentians), the great triple stone fort of Caher-commaun is seen on the edge of the northern cliff, and the way passes another early enclosure, with ruins of huts, called Cahernaglasha, where the *Glas* cow was stabled and her seven keepers lived. The highest point of Slievenaglasha,—rising 700 feet above the sea, which is visible far to the west,—has fourteen cairns and overlooks a long shallow valley, with strange brown patches here and there and another strong ring wall over a little cave. The patches are the *labbas* or beds of the *Glas* and her calf, the waterfall sprang from the abundant milk of the cow, and the fort is Mohernagartan ("the smith's fort"), the residence of *Lon* the Smith. The footprints of the wonderful animal and of *Lon*'s seven sons are visible on every crag, and the cave with strange cinder-like debris is the reputed forge of the "dark brown *Luno*" of (Macpherson's) *Ossian*.⁴

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At Ballynahown in Corcomroe, overlooked by the bold peel tower of Ballinalacken, are traces of the *Heanbo* (single cow), which differs from the *Glas* and gives its name to the Labbana-heanbo, a cave high up in the face of a magnificent cliff. In this bed the Heanbo will support the Leinster man who will win the freedom of Ireland in the last great battle. The cave is at the junction of three townlands, but is in none of them.⁵

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On Scatterly Island were two stones (still, I think, visible), one called Glun Senain because marked by the knee (*glun*) of St. Senan, and the other the stone on which St. Cannara⁶ floated from Kilconry to the holy isle of the woman-fearing saint.

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⁴ *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 100. I gave the legend in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxv., p. 227, and it is still told in the locality.

⁵ From Messrs. Kelleher and Hilary of Oughtidarra, to whose kindness and local knowledge I am much indebted. Cf. *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxv., p. 346.

⁶ Vol. xxii., p. 332, n. 2.

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823 Another knee-stone of St. Senan was beside the creek of Poulaniherly on the opposite shore to Scatterly. Between Dysert O'Dea and Rath Blamaic a rock with two basins bore the marks of St. Manawla's knees when she carried off the round tower of Rath.⁷ St. Columba's thumb and finger marks are shown on a limestone boulder in the road fence near the lane to his entrenched church in Glen Columbcille. The bosses on the "plague stone" at Tomfinlough church were the two plague swellings torn from a woman's head and thrown against the stone by St. Luchtighern.

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823 Not only the saints, but also Finn MacCumhail and his warriors have left marks on the rocks of Clare. A huge rock named Cloughmornia or Cloughlea, near Ballysheen and not far from Sixmilebridge, has in its sides long straight gashes where Finn and his band tried (or sharpened) their swords.⁸ Finn's fingerprints are visible on a rock which was brought to Cullaun House near Quin early in the last century by the facetious Tom Steele from Birr in King's County, where it was seen by Thomas Dineley about 1680. The stone was called "the Navel of Ireland,"⁹ and the V-marks are now regarded as the footprints of the cock that crowed at St. Peter's denial.

Hughey's Rock, a great boulder on the brow of the ridge between Edenvale and Rockmount near Ennis, bears the finger-marks of Hughey, a giant who threw it at another giant from Mount Callan.¹⁰

Caves.—I have heard at Newhall of a cave "between Ennis and Lisdoonvarna" in which runs an underground river that

⁷ *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. I., p. 50. A similar legend occurs in the *Book of Lecan*.

⁸ *The Battle of Magh Leana*, p. 30 (notes). The legend was still surviving at Ballysheen in 1899.

⁹ *The Journal of the Royal Historical and Archaeological Society*, vol. viii. (1864), p. 360. The cock legend is often represented on tombstones etc., and appears at Ennis Abbey (1460). In a version gathered by me in eastern Limerick, the cock says,—"I'm only a cock, and you're an apostle; but I'm the better gentleman any day!" In *The Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*, p. 415, the Angel Victor in the form of a bird leaves footmarks on a stone.

¹⁰ So told me by Shaneeen (Little John) O'Halloran at Edenvale in 1869 and later.

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makes old people young. The exact locality is unknown, as the people who have gone to use it have never been seen again. Lismulbreeda cave, in Dromcliff parish and near the Kilrush road, is marked all over its soft sandstone sides and roof with crosses, figures, and initials, which it is considered lucky to cut on a visit. Horses are said to have come out of the Kilcorney cave, and left descendants in the valley below.¹¹ The caves of the Broc-sidh and Faracat have already been mentioned.¹² There is a tale of a wild boar in a cave some miles to the north-east of Feakle.

Dolmens.—These were supposed to be giants' graves, and, if called "altars," the word was understood in a Christian sense, with a belief that they had been used for the mass during the prevalence of the cruel penal laws. For example, Altoir Ultach was said to be named from an Ulster priest who served the mass there in the eighteenth century because the nearest magistrates were more tolerant than those of the north.¹³ There is no evidence of any general popular belief that they were pagan altars, such an idea, where it existed, being derived from the "learned ignorance" of local gentry. The dolmens were, and are, called *leaba* (*labba*, "bed") and *leaba Diarmuid agus Grainne* (*leabha 'iermuth a'us graunnya*) from the elopement of those famous lovers. Legend on the west coast of Clare told that Diarmuid, finding that Finn could learn all the movements of his wife by biting his prophetic thumb, put seaweed on the cover of the dolmen. Finn, finding that seaweed was over the lovers, imagined

¹¹ This cave was famous in the eighteenth century for throwing out floods of water full of fish—(cf. *inter alia*, Gough's *Camden*),—and this is remembered traditionally, although the floods have been rare and insignificant since 1833. Other similar phenomena are recorded in Irish annals; e.g. in the Ulster Annals in 759 "Bennmuilte poured forth a stream with fishes," and in 867 "a strange eruption of water from Sliabh Caelann with little black fishes."

¹² Vol. xxi., pp. 180, 183, 479. The Faracat, according to *The Adventures of the Three Sons of Thorailbh*, was a monstrous cat having a crescent on its forehead and a sharp nail in its tail.

¹³ In fact, the Westroppa, Drews, and Patersons acted as trustees under friendly "Protestant discoveries" to preserve the properties of the O'Briens, Macnamaras, and Barretts from the hostile effect of the laws, c. 1730-50.

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- 773 that they had drowned themselves, and gave up the pursuit.¹⁴
823 Possibly the legend originated the association of indecency with the Clare dolmens found in 1808 by Hely Dutton.¹⁵ A girl would not guide him to the fine one at Ballygannor until assured that he was a stranger, for, it was explained to him, a woman [83] 778] could refuse nothing to a man at one of these monuments. Some such reason probably lay behind the belief that, if a couple unblest with children went to a *labba*, the defect in their household was amended. I have been told that this belief existed [84] in Clare, but got no direct evidence of it. The Tuam an goskaigh monument in Ballynahown was believed to be the grave of a giant buried with his great sword, to recover which certain young men dug and overthrew the stones; but they found nothing, and afterwards prospered so ill that they had to emigrate.¹⁶ Grania was supposed to be a male saint near Feakle, and the "scoop" in the west end of Tobergrania dolmen-well at Ballycroum was supposed to be the place where he put in his head to drink.¹⁷ The long grave of Ballykelly, famed for its lovely outlook high over the woods and lake of Doon on the flank of Slieve Bernagh, was known as "Old Grania," but the term "Granny's bed" was not unknown in East Clare. I heard no legend of a "hag" at any dolmen. The alleged rites at the "Druid's Altars" at Maryfort and Carnelly have already been noted.¹⁸ When two blocks of the latter structure were removed for use as gateposts, they returned during the night to their original site, and were never again removed. The hand of the destroyer of a dolmen near Ruan was struck by a splinter and severely injured,¹⁹ the remains of the blocks being left where

¹⁴ Corcomroe legend, given to me by the late Prof. Brian O'Looney.

¹⁵ *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare*, p. 318. On the Continent indecent names and legends are also attached to dolmens; cf. Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, vol. ii., p. 555; vol. iii., p. 845.

¹⁶ Messrs. Hilary and Kelleher of Oughtdarra.

¹⁷ So among the inhabitants in 1896-9.

¹⁸ Vol. xiii., p. 31.

¹⁹ Told to me by the sufferer. His predecessor, who had overthrown some blocks, was also unlucky. Cf. *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxiv., p. 212.

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they lay,—but no vengeance overtook those who levelled many dolmens at Miltown near Tulla. 823 778

Basin stones occur not infrequently at or near dolmens, e.g. at Kiltanon and Newgrove near Tulla; and at Ballyganner and Cappaghkennedy on the borders of Burren, at the last of which five appear in one slab. In the *Life of St. Mochulleus*,²⁰ written in 1141, a basin "like a large *hydria*" was found in a polished block of stone when the saint was levelling the site of his church on Tulla hill. The basins were evidently regarded as very early in date even in the twelfth century. The basin of Doughnambragher (Dabthach nam brathar) at Kylecane has already been noticed.²¹ A large block with two basins is amongst the remains at the place of inauguration of the local kings at Magh Adhair.²²

Pillar stones and rocks.—*Boughils* ("petrified boys") and *farbreags* ("petrified men") have been referred to in Section I.²³ A frog-like natural rock, close to the west side of the road from Kilkishen to Fortanne, was blasted and removed after 1887, but I have a sketch of it made in that year. There was a vague saying that it had been made, (and I think I was told also that it was a creature petrified when cursed), by some saint. The Coad stone is said to have been the same height (*com fhod*, "equal height or length," whence Co'ad),²⁴ as King Teige Acomhad O'Brien about 1460. It, the Cloghlea near Tomgraney, and the "cross" near Kilmoon were evidently boundary marks of church lands. Another legend of Coad

²⁰ *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. xvii.; *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xli., p. 9. The basin was filled with milk by a hind. Similar legends are found in Glendalough (County Wicklow) and elsewhere. Giraldus tells how a hollow stone at Skellig used to be filled with wine for the sacrament. [773]

²¹ Vol. xxii. (Plate IV). The name is Killian on the map, but is pronounced Kyle-e-ann, with a long stress on the last syllable.

²² *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxvii., p. 79, vol. xxxiv., pp. 190-1.

²³ Vol. xxi., pp. 183, 186; and the legend of Knocknafearbreaga on p. 185; *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxiv. (c), p. 97, vol. xxvi. (c), p. 471.

²⁴ *Com-fhod* is also a synonym for a grave.

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slain.⁵ Another Fhir mór (or huge man) was hunted from Cahermurphy stone fort to Kiltumper, where he was slain and buried.⁶ Caherdooneerish was in the tenth century reputed to have been made by Irgus, a Firbolg, at the beginning of our era; it was wrongly attributed by scholars to Fergus, son of Roigh, but the peasantry never abandoned the name of the brother of Aenghus of Dun Aengusa in Aran.

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Unlike some old schools of antiquaries, the people did not overlook the later origin of some forts, for they attributed the Grianan and Bealboruma to King Brian Boru (c. 1000), the former to defend his horse-paddock (*pars an each*) on the shoulder of Craglea. The fort of Lisnagry, in the heart of the hills near Broadford, was reputed to be the hiding-place of the great king's cattle from the Danes. King Croohore (Conor) na Siudaine O'Brien (slain 1267) was said to have built Dunconor, the great stone fort in Inishere Aran which MacLiag's poem (c. 1000) attributes to Conchraid the Firbolg. The same king, we may note, executed the latest earthworks of a fort recorded in Clare history, at Clonroad, completing the royal *rath* commenced by his father and left unfinished in 1241. Some rebuilding of Dun Conor may quite conceivably have been undertaken in his reign.

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To the fairy forts previously mentioned should be added Lissatecaun, near Lisdoonvarna. The people of Tulla had an observance by which the instigator of the destruction of a fort assumed the blame and freed the workman.

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Churches.—The church of Clonlea once stood at the opposite side of the lake, near St. Senan's well in Killaneena, whence one night it travelled down the old lane that runs into the lake, passed under the water, and reached its present site. King Conor na Siudaine built Corcomroe Abbey, and, as soon as his five skilled masons had completed the beautiful chancel and chapels, he put them to death lest they should build a rival masterpiece elsewhere. This legend is now being transferred through modern guide-books, the careless compilation of which is a great source of corruption of our legends, to Donald O'Brien, the actual, but not traditional,

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⁵ *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxv., p. 346.

⁶ *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 205.

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773 founder of the building, and is held to explain the rude and inferior work of parts of it. Quin "Abbey" was built by the famous Master Mason Gobbdn Saor, who twisted the spiral pillars of its beautiful cloister with his own hands. The builder of the south transept (1433) fell from its gable, and was killed where a tombstone with the scribed figure of an axe marks his grave. The north-west corner of Carran church overhangs, and is destined to fall on the wisest man that shall pass below it.

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773 *Castles.*—A belief similar to that about Carran church was attached to Ballymulcassel or Mountcashel castle. It is a peel tower, built by King Conor na Srona, about 1460, on a steep little knoll of rock beside the road from Sixmilebridge to Kilkishen. It was to fall on the handsomest person, and gossip told of a very ugly man who always took a longer road to avoid passing it. The same legend and gossip was attached to Newcastle peel tower, near Limerick and not far from the border of Clare. A wizard who lived in Shalee castle was so pestered by his wife that he flew away with half the tower, which remains as Glen castle near Ennistymon station. A guest praised Dysert castle to its owner, O'Dea, and wished that it were full of gold. "I'd rather have it full of O'Hiumhairs," replied O'Dea,⁷ the family so complimented being a small but warlike clan, of which one member fought in the wars of 1313-8 and is reported to have slain Richard de Clare at Dysert in 1318. I heard in 1869 that the castles near Doonass were built by seven brothers, and that six came to an untimely end at the hands of the seventh, but the legend seems now forgotten at Clonlara.

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173 *Round Towers.*—The peasants seem never to have adopted the various druidic, Cuthite, phallic, and other theories of 1770 onwards from the so-called "educated classes." To them, as to our earlier writers, the towers are steeples built by saints. John Lloyd, in 1780,⁸ calls that of Scatterry "the loftiest old Steeple in the Kingdom." Michael O'Brannan, in 1794,⁹ tells how St.

⁷ *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 157. The tale closely resembles a legend of St. Caimin of Iniscaltra and Guaire Aidhne at Iniscaltra, Lough Derg.

⁸ *A Short Tour etc.*, p. 21.

⁹ Poem on Shannon, *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. ii., pp. 15-8.

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Senan "built seven churches and a beautiful high belfry" there, and how "St. Cairnin, a vigorous chieftain, erected seven churches and a high belfry" on Lough Derg. Legend told that St. Senan, while building his tower, was interrupted by a woman, and left it unfinished.¹⁰ St. Blawfugh (Blathmac) built two towers at Rathblamac, one of which was stolen and brought to Dysert O'Dea by St. Manawla. Of the bells of Dromcliff and Kilnaboy towers I have already told.¹¹ Kilnaboy tower was broken down by "the bombardment of Cromwell." The round tower at Tomgraney was faintly remembered, in Petrie's time, as like that on Iniscaltra, but it has long since been forgotten.

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Crosses and monuments.—I have already mentioned the cross of Dysert O'Dea,¹² which was unusual in having portions of its carvings on separate pieces of stone, some of which are lost. The cross fell twice, and was re-erected by Conor Crone O'Dea in 1683 and by Col. Syngé of Mount Callan in 1872; each benefactor died in the year following his restoration of the cross. The breaking off or fall of any portion of the monument of Sir Donal O'Brien, the first of the baronets of Dromoland, in Kilnasoolagh church, is fatal to his descendants, and so is any attempt to clean or repair it, tradition alleging that one of the O'Briens always dies in either case.¹³ My own family believed that, if the family vault were opened, it had soon to be opened twice again to receive new occupants.

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Underground passages.—One is said to lead from Cahercrochaun to Dundahlin on Loop Head, and another from the great promontory fort of Dundoillroe eastwards, where a brown track, probably an old road, still remains. A third ran through Barnagosaigh to the Tuamnagosaigh in Ballynahown, near Lisdoonvarna, where there is a roofed cleft of some length. A fourth went from Bealboruma fort under the Shannon; through it the angry Brian Boru sent soldiers to waylay and kill his slandered

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¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18. The same tale is told of St. Declan and the beautiful perfect round tower of Ardmore, County Waterford.

¹¹ Vol. xxii., p. 336; *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 144.

¹² Vol. xxii., pp. 57, 456.

¹³ The fall of an angel not long before the death of the late Lord Inchiquin greatly strengthened the belief.

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173 son-in-law the King of Leinster. Others connected Killone with
773 Clare Abbey, and Quin Abbey with St. Finghin's church at the
823 other side of the "Kine."

XXI. *Miscellaneous and Addenda.*

173 *Treasure legends and hunting.*—Many forts have been much
556 defaced by persons seeking treasure, though treasure legends are
few. Caherscrebeen, near Lemeneagh castle (the Caherscribnib
of 1551),¹⁴ is said to be the richest fort in Ireland, having three
rooms full respectively "of gold, deer's tallow, and *beor lochlanagh*"
or Dane's beer (made by a lost recipe from heather and "the
finest of all drinks").¹⁵ Treasure-hunting is, so far as I have
learned, in nearly every case in consequence of a dream, especially
[1787] of a dream repeated more than once. No particular ceremony
seems to have been used. The dreamer went, usually by night
and sometimes alone or sometimes with a few friends, to the
spot indicated, and dug until tired and hope of success was lost.
Most of the damage done to stone forts and castles results,
in the former from rabbit hunters, and in the latter from people
getting material for other buildings. Silver (money) is believed
to be buried in the mound of Lismehane castle, and near the
curiously scribed rock of Cloch-an-airgid (rock of the silver)
near Bohneill castle. I have seen in the field within Dunlicka
castle,¹⁶ near Kilkee, the holes made by a seeker who was told
[172] to dig where he saw a rush growing. "The great Clare gold
find" in 1845, near Moghane fort, enriched archaeology rather
than folklore. But the finders in some cases believed it to
be fairy gold, and the people of Newmarket-on-Fergus tell that
those who got it, with one exception, did not profit by it; the
one lucky exception did not find his prosperity permanent. The
only interesting treasure tale I have found is that of the townland
of Skaghvickencrow (MacEnchroe's hawthorn), told by Dr. G. U.

¹⁴ In the will of the last recognised King of Thomond, Murrough, Earl of Thomond.

¹⁵ *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxi., p. 368.

¹⁶ See also vol. xxi., p. 344.